

MS. B. 1. 6



Dean *NEWCOME*'s
S E R M O N

PREACH'D before the

LORD MAYOR, &c.



On *Easter* Tuesday, *April* 8, 1735.

JACKSON. Ⓟ



Conyers *Locum tenens*
BELLAMY, Mayor.

Tuesday the 22d Day of *April*, 1735. and
in the Eighth Year of the Reign of King
GEORGE the Second of *Great-*
Britain, &c.

IT is Order'd, That the Thanks of this Court
be given to the Reverend *Dr. Newcome*, Dean
of *Gloucester*, for his Sermon preach'd before this
Court, and the Governors of the several Hospitals
of this City, at the Parish Church of *St. Bridget*,
on *Tuesday* in *Easter-Week* last; and that he be
desired to Print the same.

JACKSON.

A
SERMON
PREACH'D before the
RIGHT HONOURABLE
THE
LORD MAYOR,
THE
ALDERMEN,

AND

Governors of the several Hospitals of the
City of LONDON;

AT THE

Parish-Church of St. BRIDGET,

On TUESDAY in *Easter-Week*, *April 8.* 1735.

By *DANIEL NEWCOME*, D.D.
Dean of GLOUCESTER.

LONDON:

Printed for J. and J. PEMBERTON, at the *Golden Buck*.
against St. *Dunstan's* Church in *Fleetstreet*. 1735.

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SERMON

By the Right Honourable

THE

LORD MAYOR

THE

ALDERMEN

AND

Governors of the several Hospitals of the
City of London

AT THE

Parish-Church of St. Bride

On Tuesday in Easter Week, April 3. 1735



By DANIEL WILKINS, D.D.

Dean of Gloucester.

LONDON:

Printed for J. and J. Knapton, at the Golden Ball
against St. Dunstons Church in Fleet-street. 1735



GALAT. VI. ¹⁰.

*Let us do good unto all men, especially
unto them, who are of the household of faith.*



AS the Christian Religion furnishes us with many good and powerful arguments against excessive anxiety and discontents, the bitter and hard effects of losses and poverty, which men are not able to retrieve: So do the Laws of our blessed Religion prescribe the most extensive and most sublime rules of beneficence to other Christians, who are in circumstances to contribute to the relief of the poor and distress'd. *We are to do good unto all men, especially unto them, who are of the household of faith.*

I shall state both these directions of the text.

First, The universality of Christian beneficence: it is to be extended to all men, who, by

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image we bear; are descended of the same race; endued with immortal souls like ourselves; and represent to us, what sorrows God might have ordered to have been our lot. The prophet *Isai-ah* mentions this thought of our common nature, as a reason, which challenges a man, *to deal his bread to the hungry, to bring the poor that is cast out to his house; when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thyself from thy own flesh.* What if we are above any fears of falling under such kind of wants? we are in the body, which subjects us to pains, and many other sorrows, wherein we may need all the aids and arts of humanity to ease and comfort us. Remember them, says the Apostle, *that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.* Which intimates, that charitableness is due from us by a rule of equity; it is considering the case of other men, as we would desire, if we were in their condition, to be considered ourselves.

And in all the Christian Religion, there is no duty we are to discharge toward one another, that has such an account put upon it, as this; which is requir'd with assurances, that God will not forget to reward our work and labour of love, which we shew toward his name: and that with those sacrifices God is well pleased; his approbation of our merciful deeds is express'd, as if he took delight in beholding us doing good to one another; in resemblance of the real pleasure that arises in our souls, from the comforts we afford

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to perishing men. And perhaps the joy of meeting seasonable relief in a day of distress, does not come up to the true satisfaction a good man takes in applying the blessings of God, as he knows he ought to do. I have no doubt, but the words spoken by our Saviour, *that it is more blessed to give than to receive*, are verified to many charitable persons on eminent occasions of doing good:

No man can ever have cause to be sorry for his actions of this sort; and no man will avoid repenting himself sooner or later of the designs and contrivances which have made him the instrument of any other man's ruin.

To do good, is not only to gratify the best and most generous inclinations of human nature, but to please God, and in his favour is life and pleasure, that will endure for evermore. True benevolence toward men, God has declared to be of very near affinity to the first great article of piety and love that is due to himself. *The second commandment is like unto it, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.* St. John tells us, it is incredible a man can love God that hates his neighbour, 1 John iv. 20. *If any man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar, he is not to be believ'd.*

We know indeed, that by the new testament, good men are directed to expect their *recompence at the resurrection of the just*. But with this vast and blessed prospect on eternal futurity, they do
not

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not wholly lose their reward in this world. Works of Charity procure them esteem and love while they live, and will preserve their memory in reputation after their death. The difference between such friends to mankind, and others who live meanly to themselves, is elegantly described by the wise son of Sirach. *Some there be that have no memorial, who are perished as tho' they had never been born, and their children after them. But these were merciful men, whose righteousness hath not been forgotten: with their seed shall continually remain a good inheritance, and their children are within the covenant.*

But the greatest excellence of doing good is this, that it is an imitation of *our Father which is in heaven, and likens us to him*: who always is perfectly good, and ever continues to do good through the whole creation. He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, he sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

From this short and general view, how Christianity requires us *to do good unto all men*, it appears, that Christians are laid under the most indispensable obligations, and have the highest encouragements that can possibly be conceived to be universally beneficent. And all that wish well to mankind, cannot but with the sense of this most excellent religion may every where prevail, and that these rules of mercy, kindness and usefulness to one another, might be universally observ'd.

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The great effects of universal beneficence, will be specified to all desirable advantage by the Report of the great numbers of poor Children, and very many other Objects of Christian Compassion, maintain'd in the several Hospitals, under the pious care of the Lord Mayor and Commonalty, and other worthy Citizens of this great and ancient City.

The true Report.

The Text requires us *to do good unto all men, but especially unto them who are of the household of faith.* This particular direction obliges me to speak more largely upon one of the most beneficial Charities that is known, or perhaps can be practised in the Christian world. I mean the Charity of providing for the virtuous and religious Education of mighty numbers of Orphans, and helpless Children of the poor; who are thereby mercifully delivered from the immediate miseries of beggary, and the dangerous courses of an idle, vagrant life. And here I will endeavour to represent,

First, The most immediate and probable benefits of a religious Education.

Secondly, That this branch of publick Charity, is now more necessary than ever, considering the progress of Infidelity, and of the *Romish* Religion,

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gion, among the vicious and ignorant people of this nation:

First, As to the benefits of a religious Education. That is not only a very probable method, but most commonly a very effectual preservative to keep young persons from falling early into habits of vice; which are apt to take possession in our depraved nature, sooner than our reason or observation apprises us of the danger and growing mischiefs of wicked customs, which are afterward known to have an incredible power to inflame and beset people to extravagances and excesses against all the reasons of their interest, their health, their reputation, and the true enjoyment of their lives in the present world, as certainly as against the welfare of their souls for ever. And bad habits arrive to that height, whilst inconsiderate creatures have no thoughtful apprehensions how far the beginnings of vice may carry them.

When they venture to be engaged by bad company in a bad way of life, they know not what wickedness they may be led to commit, nor where they shall be able to stop. Sinners are often carried by some one vice to commit crimes, which we may imagine were before far out of their view. And since habits of vice are ready to get that strength, which is hard to be overcome, and threatens to be fatal by the strange alterations, which depraved affections and guilty thoughts may produce in men, and leave them

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to commit the most destructive crimes: Therefore a religious education, which is like to prevent those evils, ought to be esteem'd a very beneficial appointment toward the general good of mankind.

It will not be disputed, that those who are formed sober and virtuous by an early sense of Religion, have great advantages to continue virtuous; that manner of life having been made familiar and easy to them by use; and as they are acquainted with the satisfactions of avoiding the blame and guilt of notorious offences against God and man, they cannot easily turn profligates. If some prove so, after all the care and pains that could be bestow'd on them, it is not to be denied however, that religious instructions are very proper and promising means, and often successful to restrain many from the bad ways, to which hardened and stupid ignorance fatally delivers up too many wretched offenders.

This is not all, that the charitable foundations for educating youth in religion and virtue are beneficial to particular people, considered in their separate and private capacity. But this sort of charity is of no small importance to the general welfare and prosperity of the nation. For by all accounts of the most memorable advancements and declensions of kingdoms, there is no moral observation that has holden more universally true than this recorded by *Solomon*, *Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.* I add,

Secondly,

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Secondly, That the publick charity of providing for the religious education of poor children is now more necessary than ever, on account of the great and open progress of Infidelity and Popery among the vicious and ignorant people of this nation. These things must be matter of concern to every one, who has at heart the safety of the nation, or the care of our most excellent Religion. In order to put some stop to those growing dangers, the good design of educating the common people in virtuous industry, and in the principles of the Protestant Religion, deserves our particular regard and encouragement at this juncture: because those people who are well established in the religious belief of the Scriptures, and are dispos'd to be virtuous, are commonly far enough out of danger of being turned Infidels or Papists.

Now it is natural to expect upon the progress of Infidelity, that dissoluteness of morals will continually prevail in proportion as the sense of Religion declines: But that the impieties of Deists should dispose numbers of other people to become easy converts to the superstitions of the *Romish* faith, is another evil which was not so obvious to be apprehended. But as much as this may seem a paradox on the first hearing, time has prov'd it to be too true. And among other causes that may be assigned, why Deists, it is to be supposed, may have very little or no concern on the sight of those unhappy events; there is this near and material agreement in the result of
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the popish doctrines and their opinions, that men may lead very loose lives upon either of those grounds, without any great fears of being punish'd in another world after their deservings.

The popish doctrines of indulgences and dispensations for all manner of wickedness, completely answer the desires of free-livers to be eas'd of many restraints in the Christian Religion. And indeed men, who can place their whole trust for salvation in the Church of *Rome*, may well enough reckon themselves at liberty to follow their immoral inclinations, having assurances to be acquitted and discharged from all transgressions of God's commandments, by vertue of some certain external expedients, which their Priests are impower'd to perform on that behalf. Here is a shew of having something to trust to, in abatement of the guilty thoughts which are apt to trouble men for their wicked actions. And if these can any way be made to look excusable, vicious men are not like to be very averse to profess such a form of religion, which they cannot but wish to be true.

And as Deists deny the divine authority of the Scriptures, they grant the first principle on which the whole fabrick of the *Romish* errors is built up and maintained, *That the Scripture is no complete rule of faith.* But if all doctrines which are there taught, be, in the judgment of our free-thinkers, no more than mere fictions of men; do not the determinations of the visible Church, in defining

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sacraments and articles of faith, stand upon as good grounds and authority, and seem as fit, upon their notions, to be observed with outward veneration, as any institution in Scripture; if ever time should bring Popery to be the religion of their country, and to be made serviceable to their secular interest?

But the divine authority and absolute perfection of the Scriptures is the sure Rule, by which the idolatrous innovations and absurdities of the *Romish* faith are to be unanswerably disproved. And the firm belief of the Scriptures is the only preservative in times of trial and temptation, to keep men stedfast to the profession of the Protestant Religion.

And since we see Deists, who tell the world they believe no article of our Christian Religion, can condescend, on certain occasions, to join in the most solemn office of the Christian Worship; I doubt they can give us no good reason, why we should believe they would refuse, if they had the like causes, to join with all the popish appointments of praying to angels and departed saints, since they are not determined to believe upon the warrant of the Scripture, *That Jesus Christ is the only Mediator between God and man.*

As to Idolatry in any shape or degree, whatever may be concluded upon that subject in the Bible, that is a name, men of free thoughts will see no cause to be frightened at; knowing very well, that
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the ancient Philosophers were all offenders that way. Thus a late eminent Advocate for the perfection of Natural Religion, who spent many years in writing bad Books to depreciate the Christian revelation, was one that could readily conform to the idolatrous worship of the *Romish* Communion in the reign of King *James* the Second. Men of that stamp are qualified to comply with any assignable worship; for they suppose religious worship to be a matter God has left entirely to men's own devices.

Now allowing it to be true, that the Philosophers generally went into the idolatrous rites and customs, which miserable ignorance had established before their times; it is to be considered, that they had been train'd up in those vain opinions, and that they had no directions from God to worship him in a better manner. Some of the Philosophers have left clear testimonies in their works, that they had more correct and rational notions of the divine Being, than to approve of the worship which the common Heathens perform'd to Idols and many imaginary Deities. But they found they had not sufficient proofs to suppress those errors in other people, who could not enter into their reasoning. *Socrates* lost his life for adhering to his dissent from the Religion of the vulgar, and is the only moral Philosopher of the ancients, who is well attested to have had the constancy to suffer on that sole account.

I will

I will readily own, that the moralists by the strength of reason, carried most of the social virtues to a great height, and laid down very wise and good rules for the common offices of life; particularly with regard to the publick good of civil Governments, they have insisted upon those just and strict laws of honour and faithfulness to a man's Country, and enobled those virtues, with those encomiums and immortal characters of magnanimity and glory, which became men, who honestly professed to be friends to virtue, and friends to mankind. They did their best to promote the cause of virtue, they urged all the arguments unassisted reason could bring from the different natures of virtue and vice, and the irregular conditions of good and bad men in the present world, to establish the rational belief of a future state, and persuade men to be upright and virtuous.

Whereas it is one of the grievances with our modern refiners upon the natural plan of morality, that the sacred laws of Revealed Religion are irreconcilable to their practical maxims of pleasure; and because the danger of vicious wickedness is therewith determin'd to be inevitably more dreadful and certain than appeared by the light of nature, therefore they are desirous to have recourse to the religion of nature, and disclaim the belief of any revelation to instruct men farther in the knowledge of God, and moral duties, as a vain superstition, like purgatory or

transubstantiation, which are clog'd with infinite absurdities.

Now it is known, these declarations of our professed Deists are capable of being improved to very bad purposes by *Romish* Priests, when they are to practise upon well-meaning, but weak, and ill-instructed people, who happen to hold Christianity in some degrees of esteem. To such they can remonstrate, that it appears by confessions of our own side, that the Belief of Christianity, and all articles of faith, are become very doubtful and unsettled opinions among Protestants, who have rejected the infallibility of the visible Church; and they can artfully insinuate strange fears from men's making use of their private judgment in points of religion; it being one of their favourite Topicks, that all damnable impieties and heresies have always sprung from that fountain; to keep men safe from those dangers, they conclude they ought to rest their souls on the foundation of implicit faith in their Church. Now as little argument, or honest reason, as there is in this way of wheedling people out of their understanding, it looks specious to those, who are offended and grieved to hear and see the grounds and principles of the Christian Religion discarded and vilified by professed Protestants. And as those people cannot entertain the thought of renouncing the faith of Christianity, they are persuaded to think it safer to turn Papists, rather than continue in a way to become infidels.

Hence

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Hence the harvest is plenteous for vast numbers of *Romish* Emissaries to find full business, and to make great earnings amongst us. They have very large demands upon the wealth of this nation, and for that cause they are concern'd to make the most of their opportunities to bring back our wandering people under their obedience.

As to the Libertines, who have given up all regard to the Christian Religion, they are hopeful to be made any thing, without any supposition that they either wish or would like to see Popery prevail; nor need it be imagined, that their efforts to blast the credit of Christianity proceed from malevolence to the Protestant Religion, or from pure malice to its Ministers: But it is their declar'd sense, they freely own, that in their account all Priests and all instituted Religions are the same; and because the affair of Religion in their opinion is of very little value, and not worth contending for to any ones damage in another way; such men do not suffer us to doubt, that they are not to be depended on for any real fidelity to the Protestant establishment, howsoever zealous they may shew themselves for the Protestant establishment whilst it stands safe.

But the notions of the Deists being commonly valued by them, as *Characteristicks* of distinguishing penetration, and these set off with airs of

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ridicule and satire upon religious credulity and superstitious weakness, take immediately with people of little thought and virtue, and set them above the dull business of examining and searching to the bottom of the controversy; they have the pleasure to fancy they are at once let into the secret, and value themselves that they have easily attained to the great accomplishment of being possessed with a thorough scorn of Revealed Religion.

One effect of this dissolute humour, is already too visible in many parts of the Kingdom, that the publick worship of God begins to be neglected almost as much by our ordinary people, as by the professed Scepticks. Not that I would have it supposed, those notions have gotten into their heads, but they are led by the examples of people above them, into a shameless, but now a fashionable disregard to the Duties of religious worship.

At last, if all that may be said upon the impiety of spreading irreligion goes for nothing, with those who are determin'd Deists; there is something else to be offered if they will think upon it: That the general progress of irreligion has a very sad tendency to destroy the benefits, and the very being of our civil Government. For if all sense of Religion was to be put down, the way must be open for all the disorders and miseries that can flow in upon the nation, from the barbarities, frauds and rapines, which prevail
among

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among Savages, and make them common sacrifices to one another, and expose them to become common slaves through the world.

And that Religion certainly deserves to be esteemed the surest basis and support of civil Government: What is it, but the belief and sense of Religion, that makes an Oath a sacred security between Princes and their People? And certainly it is a valuable privilege among us, that men's lives and properties are not tried without proofs, wherein it is infinitely dangerous to falsify and prevaricate. Those who do not admit the credibility of God's special interposals to afford mankind the blessings of his revealed will, may with equal reason conclude for themselves, that the particular providence of God is not at all concerned about any man's actions, whether they be good or bad, which comes to the same thing with absolute Atheism.

But I will pass over that argument, and propose one thought farther, whether it does not become such men to recollect that they are members of a *Christian Community*; and that by aiming to weaken the bands, by which that *Community* subsists, and on which its preservation depends, whether they are not in reality doing irreparable mischief, by no means becoming men who pretend upon principles of humanity, to value the well being of their Country which protects them in all they enjoy.

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It might be made appear farther, that the rude and scurrilous treatment of the Christian Religion is unjustifiable in point of morality, and of prudence, and above all, with regard to the events of general irreligion.

But I am sensible it is high time to hasten to a conclusion.

I will only take the liberty to offer one short observation more on the eminent usefulness of the Charity that is applied toward the Christian education of the Children of our poor. That the instructions of the sacred Scriptures give us clearer and juster notions of God, and of all the Duties that can possibly arise to us in every relation of life, than all the Philosophy of the world pretended to prescribe. And as the internal excellence of Christ's Religion is agreeable to the all-perfect goodness and righteousness of God; so was it amply proved and attested to be of divine authority by all the external evidences that can reasonably be desired to establish the belief of any revelation God would communicate to the world.

If according to this heavenly knowledge, we make use of *our opportunities, and are ready to do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith; we then are laying up in store for ourselves a good foundation against the time*
to

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to come, and shall be rewarded with THE JOYS OF ETERNAL LIFE. And that we may, the most good God grant for his infinite mercies sake in Jesus Christ: To whom, with the Father and the holy Spirit, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

F I N I S.





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